

***Oenothera caespitosa* Nutt. ssp. *caespitosa***

caespitose evening-primrose  
Onagraceae (Evening-Primrose Family)

**Status:** State Sensitive

**Rank:** G5T5S2

**General Description:** Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1961):

Caespitose, acaulescent perennial rarely as much as 10 inches tall, glabrous to densely pubescent or villous. Leaves narrowly to broadly oblanceolate, 4 to 10 inches long,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch broad, the petioles slender, usually subequal to the runcinate or pinnatifid to remotely toothed or nearly entire blades. Flowers sessile to pedicellate, vespertine. Free hypanthium slender, somewhat flared above, 2 to 5 inches long, greenish or reddish. Calyx lobes 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch long, connate or free. Petals white, aging to pinkish, obcordate, 1 to 2 inches long. Anthers  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long. Stigma lobes  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  inch long. Capsule sessile, usually curved, tuberculate on the angles,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long.

**Identification Tips:** *Oenothera caespitosa* ssp. *caespitosa* can be easily distinguished from other caespitose perennial species of *Oenothera* by its large white flowers that become pinkish in age.

**Phenology:** Flowers late April through mid-June. Flowers of plants in the *Oenothera* genus generally open at sunset.

**Range:** Known from eastern Oregon eastward, through Montana and Wyoming, to the Dakotas. In Washington, the taxon occurs in Kittitas, Yakima, Grant, and Benton counties in the Columbia Basin physiographic province.

**Habitat:** The subspecies occurs as scattered individuals or colonies in open sites on talus or other rocky slopes as well as along the flat river terrace of the Columbia River. It can also colonize roadcuts and other exposed sites. It occurs within general areas that are dominated by *Artemisia tridentata* or *Artemisia rigida*. *Chrysothamnus nauseosus*, *Eriogonum douglasii* and *E. niveum* are common shrubs in the vicinity. Other associated species include *Poa secunda*, *Stipa thurberiana*, *S. comata*, *Oryzopsis hymenoides*, *Koeleria cristata*, *Astragalus purshii*, *A. succumbens*, *Balsamorhiza careyana*, *Chaenactis douglasii*, *Comandra umbellata*, *Cryptantha pterocarya*, *Cymopterus terebinthinus*, *Erigeron filifolius*, *Leptodactylon pungens*, *Mentzelia laevicaulis*, and *Phacelia hastata*. Elevation ranges from 400 to 1200 feet.

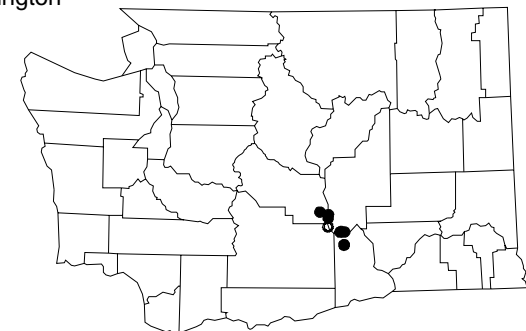
***Oenothera caespitosa* ssp. *caespitosa***

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Known distribution of  
*Oenothera caespitosa* spp.  
*caespitosa* in Washington



- Current (1980+)
- Historic (older than 1980)

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Photo by  
Katy Beck



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**Ecology:** *Oenothera caespitosa* ssp. *caespitosa* occurrences in Washington are located both in areas that have undergone, or are undergoing, natural and human-caused disturbances, and in areas with no evidence of disturbance. The degree to which the taxon may require some level of disturbance is unclear.

**State Status Comments:** There are fewer than 10 known occurrences in Washington.

**Inventory Needs:** Additional inventory is needed throughout the Columbia Basin.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Threats to the taxon include disturbance to the habitat by grazing, road construction and maintenance, land conversion, and mineral extraction.

**References:**

Hitchcock, C. L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1961. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 3: Saxifragaceae to Ericaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 614 pp.

Wagner, W.L., R.E. Stockhouse and W.M. Klien. 1985. The systematics and evolution of the *Oenothera caespitosa* species complex (Onagraceae). *Monographs in Systematic Botany* Vol. 12. Missouri Botanical Garden. 103 pp.